

TALKS TO MEN

ABOUT THE BIBLE AND THE CHRIST OF THE BIBLE

BY

R. A. TORREY

AUTHOR OF

“WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES,” “HOW TO PRAY,” ETC.

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EIGHTH TALK

WHAT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS FROM THE DEAD PROVES

IN our last three addresses we have seen conclusive evidence that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. We have followed a number of independent lines of argument. Several of these taken alone satisfactorily prove the fact of the resurrection, but taken together they constitute an argument that makes doubt of the resurrection of Christ impossible to a candid mind. But suppose He did rise from the dead, what of it? What does His resurrection prove? It proves everything that most needs to be proved. It proves everything that is essential in Christianity.

1. First of all, *the resurrection of Christ from the dead proves that there is a God, and that the God of the Bible is the true God.* Every effect must have an adequate cause, and the only adequate cause that will account for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God, the God of the Bible. When Jesus was here upon earth, He proclaimed the God of the Bible “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” the God of the Old Testament as well as the New. He claimed that after men had put Him to death, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the Bible, would raise Him from the dead the third day. This was a stupendous claim to make, apparently an absurd claim. For centuries men had come and gone; they had lived and died, and as far as human observation went, that was the end of them; but Jesus claimed that after all these centuries of men living, dying, and passing into oblivion, that God, the God of the Bible, would raise Him from the dead. Jesus died; He was crucified, dead, and buried; the appointed hour at which He had claimed God would raise Him from the dead came. God did raise Him from the dead, and thereby Jesus’ astounding claim was substantiated, and it was decisively proven that there is a God, and that the God of the Bible is the true God. For centuries men have been seeking for proofs of the existence and character of God. There is the teleological argument, the argument from the marks of creative intelligence and design in the material universe; a good argument in its place. There is the argument from the intelligent guiding hand of God in human history; the ontological argument, and other arguments, all more or less convincing: but the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead provides us with a solid, scientific foundation for our faith in God. In the light of the resurrection our faith in God is built upon observed facts. In the light of the resurrection of Jesus, atheism and agnosticism have no longer any standing ground. Well might Peter say, “We through Him are believers in God, who

raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory” (1 Pet. i. 21). My belief in the God of the Bible is not a felicitous fancy. It is a fixed faith resting upon an incontrovertibly firm fact.

2. In the second place, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that Jesus is a teacher sent from God, who received His message from God, that He was absolutely inerrant, that He spoke the very words of God.* This was Jesus’ claim for Himself. In John vii. 16 He says, “My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me.” In John xii. 49 He says, “I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.” In John xiv. 10, 11 He says, “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake.” In John xiv. 24 He says, “The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me.” His claim was that His words were the very words of God. This too was a stupendous claim to make. Others have made similar claims, but the difference between their claims and that of Jesus is that Jesus substantiated His claim, and no one else has ever substantiated his. God Himself unmistakably set His seal upon this astounding claim of Jesus Christ by raising Him from the dead. In the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that school of criticism that assumes to question the absolute inerrancy of Jesus Christ as a teacher, and to set its authority up above that of Jesus, has absolutely no standing ground. Yea further, that school of criticism, by putting forward its unsubstantiated claims in opposition to the demonstrated claims of Jesus Christ, makes itself a laughing-stock in the eyes of thoughtful men.

3. In the third place, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that He is the Son of God.* The Apostle Paul says in Rom. i. 4, that He is “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,” and any one who will stop to think will see that this is beyond a peradventure true. When Jesus was here upon earth, He claimed to be divine in a sense in which no other man was divine. He taught that while even the greatest of God’s prophets were only servants, He was a Son, an only Son (Mark xii. 6, note context). He claimed that He and the Father were one (John x. 30), and that all men should honour Him, even as they honoured the Father (John v. 23); that He was so completely and fully indwelt of God, such a perfect and absolute incarnation of God, that he that had seen Him had seen the Father (John xiv. 9). This was a most amazing claim to make, a claim which, if not true, was rankest blasphemy. He told men that they would put Him to death for making this claim, but that after they had put Him to death God Himself would set His seal to the claim by raising Him from the dead.

They did put Him to death for making this claim; the disbelievers in the deity of Jesus Christ of that day caused Him to be nailed to the cross of Calvary for claiming to be divine (Matt. xxvi. 63-66); but when the appointed hour had come the breath of God swept through the sleeping clay, and God Himself, as Jesus claimed He would, set His seal to Christ's assertion of His own deity by raising Him from the dead, and God thus proclaimed to all ages, with clearer voice than if He should speak from the open heavens today, "This is My only-begotten Son, the One in whom I dwell in all My fulness, so that he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father." In the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Unitarianism has absolutely no logical standing ground.

4. In the fourth place, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that there is a judgment day coming*. On Mars Hill, Paul declared "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead," thus making the resurrection of Christ the God-given assurance of the coming judgment. But how does the resurrection of Christ give assurance of coming judgment? When Jesus was upon earth, He declared that the Father had committed all judgment unto Him. He declared further that the hour was coming in which all that were in their graves should hear His voice and come forth; they that had done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that had done evil unto the resurrection of judgment (John v. 22, 28, 29). Men ridiculed His claim, hated Him for making the claim, put Him to death for making the claim and the other claim involved in it, that of deity, but God set His seal to the claim by raising him from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, which is an absolutely certain fact of history in the past, points with unerring finger to an absolutely certain coming judgment in the future. Belief in a coming judgment day is no guess of theologians. It is a positive faith founded upon a proven fact. In the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the man who continues in sin, flattering himself with the hope that there will be no future day of reckoning and of judgment, is guilty of madness. Jesus will sit in judgment, and every one of us must give account to Him of the deeds done in the body.

5. In the fifth place, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that every believer in Christ is justified from all things*. We read in Rom. iv. 25 (R. V.) that Jesus "was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." More literally, "He was delivered up because of our trespasses (that is, because we had trespassed), and was raised because of our justification (that is, because we were justified)." The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves decisively that the believer in Him is justified. But how? When

Jesus was on earth He said that He would offer up His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28). The hour came, He offered up His life on the cross of Calvary as a ransom for us. Now the atonement has been made, but there still remains a question, "Will God accept the atonement which has thus been offered?" For three nights and three days this question remains unanswered. Jesus lies in the grave, cold and dead. The long predicted hour comes, the breath of God sweeps through that sleeping clay, and Christ rises triumphant from the dead and is exalted to the right hand of the Father, and God proclaims to the whole universe, "I have accepted the atonement which Jesus made." When Jesus died, He died as My representative, and I died in Him; when He arose, He rose as My representative, and I arose in Him; when He ascended up on high and took His place at the right hand of the Father in the glory, He ascended as My representative, and I ascended in Him, and today I am seated in Christ with God in the heavenlies. I look at the cross of Christ, and I know that atonement has been made for my sins; I look at the open sepulchre and the risen and ascended Lord, and I know that the atonement has been accepted. There no longer remains a single sin on me, no matter how many or how great my sins may have been. My sins may have been as high as the mountains, but, in the light of the resurrection, the atonement that covers them is as high as heaven. My sins may have been as deep as the ocean, but, in the light of the resurrection, the atonement that swallows them up is as deep as eternity. "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this Man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins, and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things."

6. In the sixth place, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that all who are united to Christ by a living faith shall live again*. Paul says, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 14). The believer is so united to Christ by a living faith that if Christ rose, we must. If the grave could not hold Him, it cannot hold us. For centuries men have been seeking proofs of immortality; we have had the dreams of poets and the speculations of philosophers to cheer us with the hope that we shall live again, but the best of philosophical arguments only point to the probability of a future life. In a matter like this, the human heart craves and demands something more than a probability. In this resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we get something more than probability—we get absolute certainty; we get scientific demonstration of life beyond the grave. The resurrection of Jesus Christ removes the hope of immortality from the domain of the speculative and the probable into the domain of the scientifically demonstrated and certain. We know there is a life beyond the grave.

A popular preacher has recently said, "Not a few are not at all sure that

there is any life beyond the grave. They wish it could be proven. So do I. But we can do no more than infer it from the moral constitution of the universe.” Thank God, this popular preacher is wrong. Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ, perhaps, we could “do no more than infer it from the moral constitution of the universe,” but in the light of the resurrection it is no longer left to uncertain inferences from the moral constitution of the universe, it is proven. No further proof is needed. It is scientifically demonstrated, and to any one who will candidly ponder the facts regarding the resurrection of Christ, unbelief or agnosticism in regard to the future life becomes an impossibility. In the light of the first Easter morning I go out into the cemeteries where lies the sleeping dust of father and mother, brother, child, and all my tears are brushed away, for I hear the Father saying, Thy father shall live again; thy mother shall live again; thy brother shall live again ; thy child shall live again.

7. In the seventh place, *the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proves that it is the believers privilege to have daily, hourly, constant victory over sin.* We are united not only to the Lord who died, and thus made atonement for our sin, and thus delivered us from the guilt of sin; we are united to the Lord who rose again, who “ever liveth to make intercession for us,” and who has power to save to the uttermost, power to keep us from falling day by day, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Heb. vii. 25; Jude 24). I may be weak, utterly weak, unable to resist temptation for a single hour, but He is strong, infinitely strong, and He lives to give me help and deliverance every day and every hour. The question of victory over sin is not a question of my weakness, but of His strength, His resurrection power, always at my disposal. He has all power in heaven and on earth, and what my risen Lord has belongs to me also. In the light of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, failure in daily living is unnecessary and inexcusable. In His resurrection life and power, it is our privilege and our duty to lead victorious lives. Four men were once climbing up the slippery side of the Matterhorn, a guide and a tourist, a second guide and a second tourist, all roped together. The lower tourist lost his footing and went over the side. The sudden pull on the rope carried the lower guide with him, and he carried the other tourist with him. Three men are now dangling over the dizzy cliff. But the guide who was in the lead, feeling the first pull upon the rope, drove his pike into the ice, braced his feet, and held fast; three men dangling over the awful abyss, but three men safe, because tied to the man that held fast. The first tourist regained his place upon the path, the guide regained his, and the lower tourist regained his, and on and up they went in safety. As the human race ascended the icy cliffs of life, the first Adam lost his footing and swept over the abyss. He pulled the next man after him, and the next, and the next, and the next, until the whole race hung over the abyss;

but the second Adam, the Man in the glory, stood fast, and all who are united to Him by a living faith, though dangling over the awful precipice, are safe, because tied to the Man in the glory.